In this paper we will go through the end of the Byzantine Empire at the hands of the Ottomans and how it relates to the 4th crusade. The 4th crusade let the Ottomans take Constantinople, ended the Byzantine Empire, by; lessening the population of Constantinople during the actual Crusade, stealing vast amounts of wealth, and, causing in-fighting.

The 4th crusade was initiated by Pope Innocent III,[2] to take Egypt; this was due to the Crusaders being from Venice who were being prosecuted in Byzantium; because the Venetians helped the Normans invade them. They even sent boats to attack the country. When the Crusade was announced mostly French and Venetians showed up; Venetians because Venice was the point of assembly, and for the Frenchmen because St.Francis (yes THAT St.Francis) preached in favor for the 4th crusade in France. None went to Egypt, most went to Palestine but some went to Byzantium, because as we already said, the Venetians didn't like them, Prince Alexius took up leadership; he wanted to be the emperor of Byzantium, and the Venetians were going to help him do it. They made it to Constantinople in 1203; besieged it; and failed. Tried again and were and were able put ladders on the wall and into the city and capture it.[3] After they acquired the empire, it was divided it up into many states:

Latin empire- founded by Baldwin who was voted into power by the Crusaders

Kingdom of Thesselonia- Boniface; another crusader, (whom the Byzantines liked more than Baldwin), founded this nation, after the Crusaders didn't vote him in.[3]

-Principality of Achaia (State founded by the Franks ruled by the king of France)

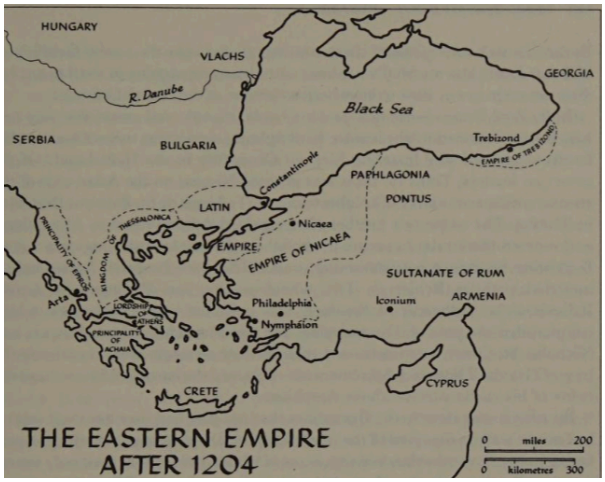
-Duchy of Athens (Ditto to the Principality of Achaia)[4]

-Despolate of Epirus: later called the "Empire of Thesselonia" (It was founded by Michael, whom the people of Epirus deemed their native ruler, over the crusaders)[2]

-Empire of Nicæa (founded by Bishops who didn't want to be under Pope Innocent II)

-Empire of Trebizond (founded by Alexus)[3]

Map:



3

The Ottomans weren't the most powerful nation, but they had ambition.[1] Byzantium (now reunified under the Empire of Nicæa)[3] was going to be theirs. They started taking cities on the border and Byzantine really couldn't do much to stop them. They hadn't any allies to help (others were fighting the Ottomans but didn't aid Byzantine just to hinder the Ottomans); even Mother Nature was against them having an Earthquake lose them a city. By the 2nd half of the 14th century they were near the capital. The Byzantines made a deal with Pope Innocent the VI; he would help them once they unified the churches. They failed to unify the churches. The Ottomans were able to take everything from Byzantium, except for Constantinople. They tried again to unify the churches to get Papal help. They failed again. After this they lost Constantinople in 1453.[1]

Going back to the Crusade, during it, they stole EVERYTHING! From what the Crusaders describe as the most wealthy city that is. Over the course of three days they took all that they could find. Depleting Byzantium of wealth. Wealth that they needed being that they were already short on money. Even the churches were plundered of every thing of value, all gems and precious metals.[2] After this was all said and done the place was absolutely desolate, with most buildings raised to the ground; even after one would give it 57 years to recover.[5] They, also during the Crusade killed over 2,00 Rhomaiio and even

by 1453 it still wouldn't have the population it did before the Crusade.[3] The Crusaders also forced some Rhomaioi women into being their mistresses, this further led to population decline, as many men died trying to save their wives from this fate.[3]

Another thing that almost definitely contributed to the weakening of Byzantium leading into their fall at the hands of the Ottomans, caused by the 4th crusade; is in-fighting. Fighting means death; death means less people. With less people you can't have as big of a military and a weak (small) military you are easier to invade. With in-fighting the death toll from war is double as both sides are Rhomaioi. The Despotate of Epirus conquered the kingdom of Tessalonica, in a war that ended with the Desperate taking the city of Thessaloniki (then called Salonica). In a war there is always death, though I found multiple sources that mentioned this war, none said a death toll. After this Pope Honorius III supplied some Marquis with money to re-take Thessalonica; (reestablish the Kingdom that is) they marched all the way to Thessaly (just south of the nation's capital: Thessaloniki) before they were ambushed. They suffered no losses on their way to Thessaly;[2] thus we can inference that Epirus must have not engaged them much before the ambush, but still them tarring through the county-side and the ambush itself must have sustained some losses. In 1205 Byzantine land-owners, who were worried about land depossession; decided to ally themselves with the Bulgarians against the Venetians and Franks. They started off by capturing Demotica. The survivors of the conflict (notice "survivors" implies a good portion didn't survive). Anywho these people fled to Adrianople. The people of Adrianople rejected these refugees, making Baldwin attack the city. Kalojan (Tzar of Bulgaria) sent his troops over to help Adrianople. After the battle the Latin were routed and Balwin was captured.[3] Though Balwin would come back to his kingdom.[2] The Kingdom of Thessaloniki had also fought against the Latin Empire. As discussed before, the Latin Empire and the Kingdom of Thessaloniki; were both Crusader-states founded by different crusaders, who were, also the two people in an election for, the emperorship of the Latin Empire. Balwin captured Thessolonki (not many deaths the people there submitted to him). While Boniface went and besieged Adrianople. Both Baldwin and Boniface convened at Constantinople.[3]

Now you might say "the 4th crusade didn't let the Ottomans take Constantinople; they would have done so anyway!" This is not the case. The Ottomans started as a small principality. Considered not important.[1] Not what one would expect to be the type of thing that could bring an Empire, that had existed for nearly a millennium and a half, to its knees; and end it. They were also fighting the Emirate of Karasi at the same time. While fighting Byzantium they were also trying to unify Anitolia; fighting the likes of Karasi, form 1334-161, while also fighting Byzantium (not the whole time they did have a peace in 1346).[1] It is centerly reasonable to say that a Byzantium not crippled by the 4th crusade would be too much to handle in conjunction with the other nations, even by the powerful nations of the time, let alone some random principality! It is known that if they unified the churches then the west would come to help them. With Western help the Byzantines probably would have survived. They however couldn't reunify the churches. Even after all the Byznaitum had left was Constantinople; even with their emperor and the Pope asking them to join the Roman churches, the Byzantine patriarchs wouldn't join the Roman church)they had split in 1054),[1] but it certainly can be inferred that this made unifying them harder. I wouldn't want to be unified under an institution that helped kill thousands and stole an immense amount of wealth from us. It can easily be inferred that the 4th crusade played a part in the Rhomaioi not wanting to be part of the Roman Church; and it's hard to force people to change religion. After the sack of the Capital Innocent lamented that the 4th crusade did increase the animosity between the two churches. This reaction was unjustified, Pope Innocent III; after hearing what happened in the 4th Crusade, was scornful to the crusaders.[2,3] Even if, he praised Baldwin (the 1st emperor of the Latin empire) this was only to him (for what reasons I can not say), he was discompatient, both before and after.[3]

The 4th crusade is what led to the end of the Byzantine Empire, it did this by; lessening the population of Constantinople during the Crusade, stealing vast amounts of wealth, and, causing in-fighting. This is what allowed the Ottomans to take Constantinople and end the Empire. This is how an Empire that lasted over nearly a million and a half, that was the most powerful county ever. That changed

the culture of most-all of Europe, this is how it came to an end; with a Crusade from Venice, and an invasion from a minor principality.[0]

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The 4th crusade and the end of an empire: how the 4th crusade led to the end of the Byzantine empire at the hand of the Ottomans.

[3]

Daniel P. Coyle, World history, T. Snider